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CASEWORK RECORDING AS A REFLECTION OF CASEWORK PRACTICE*

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How recording shows the strengths and weaknesses of actual casework, is the thesis of this provocative paper.

CASEWORK recording has an inherent difference from all other forms of writing: it embodies the vital interaction between caseworker and client in a helping process within the social agency.

There has not been much recent literature on recording, with the exception of articles in the *Journal of Social Casework*, January, 1949. Therefore we feel that perhaps our own confusions and our groping for standards of format, content, and technique are not unique, and that we are not alone in the search for a re-evaluation of the recording process. Our participation in the work of the Child Welfare League Case Record Exhibit Committee, which concerned itself with the selection of the best records from the children's field for exhibition at the National Conference, stimulated us further to a re-examination of our current recording practices.

One of the questions raised in our minds was: Why has the subject of case recording been relatively dormant? Has it been because we in the child-care field were so preoccupied during the war and postwar years with keeping services going at the highest possible level despite shortages in foster homes and turnover in staff, that time could not be afforded for re-evaluation? Has it been, perhaps, because social casework practice itself has been going through re-clarification as to how it could best help people? Is recording coming to the fore again because casework practice has found a more stabilizing basis at the present time?

Case recording, in one form or another, has always existed in social work. Unfortunately it has not always been used as an integral, dynamic part of casework practice. Hence it has occupied a secondary position in the caseworker's total job, and has, for the most part, been considered a burden. Since recording cannot be divorced from casework practice, however, it will be our aim to examine in a specific agency setup how recording reflects casework practice.

* Presented at League's program, National Conference of Social Work, Cleveland, Ohio, June, 1949.

At the Pleasantville Cottage School† each child is known to a caseworker, and the only record kept of a child is the casework record (with the exception of a medical record which is kept at the institution hospital). The caseworker is responsible for the admission of the child, for continuous contact with the child's family while he is in placement, for casework help to the child while he is under care, for psychiatric referral, and for eventual planning for the child's discharge or transfer. The caseworker also has the responsibility for integrating all other services, such as the school, psychological and psychiatric services, medical and dental care, group activities, and cottage living. What happens in the total living experience of the child in the institution is utilized by the caseworker in her contact with the child, and must, therefore, be a part of the casework record.

A look at the format of our records shows the following: a face sheet, a signed application, and an intake study (which covers the contact between the intake worker, the family, the child, and a psychiatrist where necessary). All this material remains a part of the Pleasantville record, which then begins to incorporate the institution caseworker's dictation, psychiatric interviews, psychological reports, and selected correspondence.

Admission

The Pleasantville caseworker's role begins with a preadmission interview with family and child at the Intake Department. This interview is followed by an admission process, which comprises not only the worker's bringing the child to the institution, but the preparation of the institutional staff for the reception of the child and his cottage allocation. At the time of admission the worker represents, for most children,

† The Pleasantville Cottage School, one of the departments of the Jewish Child Care Association of New York, is an institution for the care of about 200 children from 8 to 16 years of age whom the Intake Department has recommended for institutional, rather than foster home, placement.

the only bit of security and the only link between what they have left behind and the future. This fact may show itself overtly in an almost desperate clinging to the worker, for separating from the known and the familiar, and entering into the unknown world of placement, carries with it pain, fear, and loneliness.

How does the caseworker record the beginning of placement? The form used is chronological, in that the process is recorded as it occurs. Here is an example which we briefed for this paper, which points up how a caseworker records the pain of separation and the admission of the child to the institution:

"Marty looked very sad in the presence of his father, as we were preparing to leave for the institution. Both were trying to control their tears. Mr. S. wanted very much to see Marty feeling better about going to Pleasantville. As we left, father and son said good-bye tenderly. In the cab, Marty sat as far away from me as possible. He ignored me completely and I left him alone. It was only after we got to the railroad station and I talked about his previous placement that Marty opened up. He told me about the people he knew there and took out his wallet to show me a picture of his girl friend. Then Marty looked at me and said with a smile, 'There's no sense in fighting you.' I was glad he felt he did not have to fight me any longer and I wondered what he had hoped to accomplish. Marty was quite frank about saying he had hoped to get out of coming to Pleasantville.

"Once at the institution, each move produced new anxiety to Marty, especially around going to the cottage itself. He had special feelings about the bed mattresses, was afraid he would not be able to sleep. In visiting the cottage, he said it gave him the creeps, although he couldn't tell me why. All of this day he was very tentative about things and wanted to know particularly how it would be at night. Marty expressed fear that nobody would bother with him and that he would be sitting alone all evening. When a group of children gathered around him and welcomed him, he seemed very surprised. He was still too frightened to leave me, to go with the boys to the clothing room. However, as the boys showed more interest in him in the clothing room, and invited him to that evening's activities, he was finally able to part from me."

As seen, one of the most important aspects of this recording is the worker's sensitivity to the feelings the child is expressing and experiencing in the very new beginning. Since so much of what happens during this period sets the focus and direction for the worker's continuing relationship with the child, and that child's ability to accept placement, recording is therefore more detailed and graphic.

While all admissions are recorded in chronological form, the timing for introduction of summary recording varies in individual situations. Where there is continuous difficulty in accepting placement by the child, and where the worker feels placement has not stabilized itself, the chronological form of recording will usually continue in order to allow for closer examination of what is happening. Where, however, the child has become more settled and has gotten into

the pattern of institutional living more easily, the form of recording shifts to summary.

Thus we can say that in the beginning phase of placement, the type of recording, both form and content, does attempt to reflect the casework practice, which embodies in it not only the separation and its deep meaning to the child, but the beginning relationship between worker, child and parent; the continuous role of the worker; and the introduction of the institutional setup and all its services.

The Middle Period in Placement

As the child remains in placement, and becomes part of the group, his former need for a clinging, dependent contact with the worker diminishes. His day-to-day living experiences offer him opportunities for different relationships and new activities. It is at this point that the worker's focus becomes more clarified and more differentiated for the child. This differentiation is especially characterized by the continuous contact the worker has with the child's family in examining and re-evaluating the relationship between the family and the child toward preparation for further planning. We refer to this period as the *middle* period in placement.

Much of what happens to the child and parent during this phase of his placement is not as fraught with newness and change, but rather becomes a slow, directed process of helping child and parent. Life now takes on a pattern of adjustment which must, of necessity, have repetitive characteristics, and therefore lends itself more logically to summary recording.

It has been our practice to record the summary in three-month blocks of time.

Here is an example of such summary recording about a child who has been in placement over four years. (Other examples could be cited here which concern themselves with more intensive contact with parents, depending upon the direction of planning.)

"During this three-month period, the outstanding problem for Norman was his school failure and the necessity of having to remove him from the community high school and placed on a modified program at the school on the institution grounds.

"This failure in school was obviously a blow to Norman. It enhanced his feeling of failure about himself. At the same time, he had to face realistically his future status either with the agency or away from it. I had many discussions with Norman about his school failure, the meaning it held for him and for his future planning, since it meant that Norman needed a vocational school program which we did not have at the institution. I found Norman to be more mellow, more responsive, and more serious in his discussions with me than heretofore. He was able to bring out that not only was the academic work in the community high school more difficult for him, but he felt like a stranger, an outsider who did not belong. He spoke more of belonging to the "institution," which represented to him a protective wall, and that it would be difficult

for him to move on from here to any other form of living. At the same time, he was even uncomfortable with the children from the institution who were attending the community high school. He felt that he was not an equal to them either in physical size or intellectual capacity. (Norman is rather short for his age.)

"It was around the school that Norman's most concrete expression of hostility and conflict about his mother came out more sharply. He felt that his mother was especially responsible for everything that had happened in his life, and he felt hemmed in by her—almost trapped like an animal. He debated with himself and talked to me about the advisability of visiting his mother when she requested this. In raising with him the question of his own strength and his ability to stand by what he wants, Norman decided not to visit for several weeks. Yet he could not sustain that decision and finally did go in, only to come back discouraged and again vowing that visiting at home was out for him. My efforts with him were to have Norman articulate these feelings and to have him feel that the agency was with him throughout.

"I have had no contact with Norman's family during this period except by correspondence with the father. From the past history, I was well familiar with the mother's pattern of hostility and rejection of Norman and her inability to work with the agency. I felt that very little could be done to help the mother to change. The emphasis was, therefore, directed toward strengthening Norman's ability to reach a definite decision about his continuing relationship to his mother."

As seen, the characteristics of this type of recording are obviously very different from those of the beginning recording. This is no longer exploratory. The worker is now concerned with putting together the known factors and directing these toward a more definite goal. This is frequently the most difficult period for child, parent and worker. It is difficult for the child and the parent in that it demands a real involvement of themselves in examining their status in relation to placement. How are child and parent using his being here? Is anything happening to him and/or his family which is becoming different from that which necessitated placement here? Visiting of the child to the family and the family to the child is one of the important casework tools in constantly examining the relationship between parent and child in placement.

Another important aspect of this middle period, which is not shown in the above example of recording, concerns itself with the kind of adjustment the child is making intramurally, *i.e.*, in the cottage, in the various activities, and in relation to the total institutional group. There must of necessity, therefore, be a constant give-and-take between the worker and the rest of the institutional personnel, since what happens in a casework relationship is frequently reflected in the child's form of behavior to the cottage or to the rest of the institution, and vice versa. Consequently, the worker in order to get a total picture of the child during the middle period, must tie into her record all these threads and use them dynamically toward further planning.

The Ending Phase

We move from this middle period to a consideration of the ending phase of placement. Ending or discharge can be caused by either return to the child's own family or moving to another form of placement such as a foster home. As differentiated from both the beginning and middle periods, the ending has a substance all its own. Although what happens in this period is the result of the sum total of the child's experiences in placement, something additional also comes into play.

Frequently this stage is one which is fraught with new anxieties. The child is faced with another change: giving up that which has become more or less secure, and taking on again something which is new. He must examine and face whether his new, different, or changed self can meet the new demands which will be placed upon him. Whether the child returns home or goes into a foster home, the parent, too, is faced with another decision—one involving a re-examination of his place in his child's life. When the plan is for the child to return home, some of the questions which parent and worker must explore are: Will this plan succeed? How will things be different now? Am I, the parent, different? Has my child changed? These questions are an indication of the doubts and insecurities which the parent is experiencing in anticipating his reunion with the child. However, the willingness of parent and child to try to live together is indicative of their readiness to invest something of themselves in the plan. At this time the worker, the parent and the child can determine whether the step is to be a trial discharge to the home under agency supervision, or outright discharge.

The following is an example of recording which illustrates work with a mother and 8-year-old child toward discharge. Placement had been initiated because the child was presenting a severe feeding problem in the home. The child remained in placement for one year.

"I saw Carol every week. Although things were not going well in the cottage, she was not ready to make any change, since she was herself beginning to think and speak about going home. In discussing her discharge Carol showed a great deal of feeling about returning home. She was reticent in discussing directly what she had gotten from living in Pleasantville which she would be able to carry back home with her. The anxiety was expressed mostly in relation to school and whether she could do well in a city school. She thought she could adjust in the home, since her vomiting had stopped, and she was no longer as picky with her food as she used to be. Her visits home were arranged on a weekly basis (this had been considered with mother and child previously) and she reported these to be very satisfactory, indicating that her parents, too, talked about her imminent return home. Carol impressed me as being more mature and able to discuss her problems with me more realistically at this time.

"The mother expressed vacillation about having Carol home. She expressed concern about her own physical condition, as well as Carol's food problems. At the same time she stated that she knew Pleasantville could not take away all of Carol's problems. She was ready to see that there were many things involved in Carol's improvement. One of them was that she considered herself to be more relaxed now with Carol, both because of their separation, and because she has not had to deal with the problem from early morning to late at night.

"As the visits home were going well, the mother was able to say that she could see a change in Carol and began to discuss with the child herself the possibility of returning home. At the same time, she brought to the worker, continuously, considerable doubt and anxiety as to what would happen should Carol's feeding problem re-occur when the child returned. In discussing this with the mother, the worker recognized that she had basis for anxiety, gave her support in her planning, and offered and discussed the possibility of a trial discharge. The mother expressed relief with this possibility, and arranged for a two-month follow-up."

We consider discharge a distinct process which has a definite goal, that is, the moving of the child from the institution in such a way as to hopefully enable him to take on a new living situation either with or without help from the agency.

As indicated in the recording above, casework contacts are frequent during this time. Focus is now very clearly defined. The dynamics of the contacts with the worker are now so charged with imminent change and decision that recording often becomes a combination of the chronological and the summary.

The technique of recording frequently varies with the length of time of placement and the intensity surrounding the discharge. Often, when discharge is a slow-moving and vacillating process, summary recording is used, so as not to make for voluminous, repetitive entries. Where there is quick, active moving toward ending, more chronology is often introduced.

Problems of Recording

We have attempted so far to concern ourselves with recording as it illustrates our casework practice. The examples cannot be altogether typical of all the recording within our setup, since there are many variables and problems which constantly come to the fore. We believe that one cannot divorce the development, skill and capacity of a worker at a given time from the kind of recording that is done. At this point, we would like to consider some of the day-to-day problems related to recording.

1. *Length of record.* This is of particular concern to all who have to handle the record on the job, and find it cluttered with irrelevant details which often becloud and confuse the basic situation and take untold hours of reading time. Here is an example of irrelevancy in a record which adds to volume but not to understanding.

"He then asked me to phone his cottage mother, since he was in the hospital, and ask her to have someone bring over his stamp collection. I inquired whom he would like to have bring it, and he replied anyone. I asked him if he would like me to get it for him. He answered a little unsurely that he would. He told me to get the album, and a tin box which had stamps in it. I inquired on which shelf it was and he said the second. At the cottage, I located the closet, took out an album, the box and another book of stamps. When I gave them to S., he said he was sorry to trouble me, but the album that I had taken was the wrong one. He asked me to get the other one, repeating he was sorry to trouble me. I returned with the right one, and remarked to him in a light tone that while I didn't mind getting the album for him, I did mind that he hadn't given me the correct instructions as to which album he had wanted."

The above needs no comment. It poses the serious problem, however, in child placement, of what can happen to a record where a child remains under care for a number of years. Whether chronological or summary recording is used is not the issue, but rather the careful selection of material which at all times should add something new to the already accumulated record.

2. *Timing.* This has in it three distinct problems. One, the three-month block which we have been using more or less arbitrarily for summary recording. Two, the frequency with which the worker records on her cases. Three, the amount of time allotted for dictation on a job which has many pressures in it.

Questions have been raised with regard to the three-month summary dictation. Some situations lend themselves to more frequent dictation. The element of staleness enters into recording that is carried over for long periods of time. What becomes lost so often is the alive quality which is so necessary to good recording, and which a supervisor often gets in a verbal description of the interview between worker and client soon after it has taken place, and which may never show itself in the record. Then, too, recording done after many months has become old and has lost its immediate usefulness to the worker. Dictating it constitutes a burden and resistance is created. Consideration by our staff is now being given to monthly summary recording. This would necessitate more frequent dictation, but would alleviate, however, the problem of recapturing that which has happened and might decrease repetition.

The frequency of dictation is very much tied up with the pressures of the job. Often, however, many other things are given precedence, whether warranted or not, over a dictation period, because recording has carried a role of secondary importance in the total casework job.

3. *Recording as related to the professional development of staff.* One cannot separate the worker from the recording. Mention was made above that the recording done was a reflection of the skill, training

and experience of the person doing it. Inevitable problems in dictation arise in a setup such as ours where staff consists of persons of various stages of professional development, ranging from the first-year student to the very experienced worker.

The student, before he learns to differentiate between the relevant and unnecessary details, will include everything making for a cumbersome and lengthy record. This is also often characteristic of recording for first-year workers and for workers new to agency structure and function. The worker who is insecure in her job, regardless of the amount of experience, finds it hard to be selective about material, and leaves it to the supervisor to decide what is important and what is not. The supervisor must be ready to assume the responsibility for helping these workers with their specific problems in recording, for so often the very development of the worker is reflected in this written word. One example perhaps might be illustrative of this:

A first-year worker coming to the agency showed real facility in the use of casework terminology in a generalized way. However, what was lacking was the worker's own participation and real involvement with the clients, as shown in the recording. This also showed itself in the supervisory relationship. As the supervisor handled this problem, and the reasons for it as demonstrated in the recording, some changes were observed and difference was noted in the way the worker used herself through the record. Specifically, these changes, over a six-month period, involved a movement from generalized verbage, to intellectualization, and finally to a more simple and direct method of recording. Simultaneously, there was a greater giving and sharing of herself in supervision.

This example points up how recording can be used as a dynamic tool in supervision, thus helping the worker develop in her casework practice.

From this logically follows some consideration of the use of records. As was seen, one of the most important uses is for supervision and teaching. This is especially true for students and new workers to the agency. Student recording poses a particular problem. In Ruby Little's article in the *Journal of Social Casework*, January, 1949, on "Diagnostic Recording," the following point is made: "It is probable that students would profit by a method that permits detailed recording for purposes of supervision and teaching, followed by condensation and summary for entry into the permanent record."

This would merit real consideration in a setup such as ours, but it poses real problems. Who is to do the summary for the permanent record? Can this be

expected of the student in the early stages of his development?

In addition to the supervisory and teaching purposes, the record is used in many other ways.

1. Transfer from one worker to another within the department. The good record should enable the new worker to pick up where the last worker left off without undue repetition.
2. Transfer of record from one division in the agency to another.
3. Meeting of inquiries from community agencies where worker and child are no longer in the agency, and where the person answering the inquiry is solely dependent on the recorded material. Particularly helpful at this time are transfer or closing summaries which are part of our current recording practice. It may be interesting to point out here that there is a policy of microfilming records for those children who have been discharged from the agency ten years or longer. During the war, much use was made of these microfilmed records.

Because the content of the recorded material may have wide community and legal aspects, and because the record has a variety of uses, the effectiveness of the content in meeting these needs must be carried jointly by administrator, supervisor and worker. This includes the whole broad question of the confidentiality of records.

In concluding this paper, we would like to stress the dissatisfactions which exist among our staff with the present method and philosophy of recording. This dissatisfaction, it seems to us, stems from the lack of clarity as to the real purpose and use which recording must serve, and the insufficient recognition which this part of the job has been given, both in the schools of social work and in the field as a whole.

This paper has posed many problems for which we have no solutions. However, what has become increasingly clearer to us is that recording cannot continue along its own merry way as a stepchild in the field of social work. Administration, supervisors and staff must share responsibility and take the initiative in elevating recording to its rightful place. One way in which this may be achieved for agencies is to make provisions for greater experimentation and more research. Then, perhaps, some of the searched-for answers may emerge.

NEW LEAGUE PUBLICATION

FEE CHARGING FOR ADOPTION SERVICE, by Eilene F. Crosier. November, 1949. Price 40 cents.

A discussion of philosophy and practice based on a study of current practices regarding fee charging for adoption service among member agencies of Child Welfare League of America. Introduction by C. Rollin Zane, Executive Director, The Connecticut Children's Aid Society.

THE POSITIVE APPROACH TO PROTECTIVE SERVICE*

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An effective community program for the protection of children from abuse and neglect.

IN considering an effective program for the protection of children from abuse and neglect, I should like first to give some consideration to what we mean by protection, and to the kind of responsibility which social agencies have accepted for the protection of children.

The problem of protective care for neglected children is an old and perplexing one to both public and private agencies. It is a problem that exists in all communities, be they large or small. It exists among all groups, the economically secure as well as the economically disadvantaged, among the intelligent as well as the mentally incapable. The same characteristics may be observed in all; a breakdown of parental responsibility, with tensions and pressures on family life which result in dangers for children.

Some parents, faced with confusing and perplexing problems which are threatening or disrupting their family life and their relationships with their children, are able to seek a solution to their difficulties. These parents go to an agency to get help for themselves which may make it possible for them to accept their parental responsibility; or they come to terms with themselves by recognizing that this is not possible, and therefore ask for placement of their children. Because such parents have begun to do something to change the situation for their children, the children cannot be said to be neglected. We must exclude this group, then, in considering a program for neglected children.

A service for the protection of children should be concerned with parents who, faced with similar situations, are not able to find a way to take even first steps to relieve their difficulties. They allow the disorganization of their family life to grow worse and worse. They take less and less responsibility for what happens to their children; or the children's behavior becomes intolerable to the community in which they live. The community then insists that something be done, both for the protection of the children and for its own protection.

This aspect of a community's attitude has often been overlooked. I believe that the community is as often concerned about what is happening to it, as about what is happening to the children. As in educa-

tion, concern is not only that children have an opportunity for education in order to grow and develop, but that an illiterate body-politic may not be a danger to the community; so neglected children are regarded as a threat to all of community living. Hence the community becomes aroused and insists that something must be done. It is here that the dilemma has come. What shall we do, and whom shall we hold responsible for doing it?

Some communities have vested this authority in the private "protective" agencies; others have passed laws allocating this responsibility to the public agency. Whether the agency be public or private, the essential thing to remember is that protection of children must be a community service, and hence cannot be considered as a sectarian problem, or as the concern of only a particular group in the community. There is a universality in the problem and in the ways in which it can be handled. The same situation, perhaps with some variations, exists everywhere; and if the handling of it is sound at all, the same principles should apply, no matter where they are applied and tested.

Development of a Protective Agency

I should like to describe specifically what has happened in one community. Baltimore, like many other communities, had for many years a private agency known as the Society for the Protection of Children from Cruelty and Immorality. This organization saw as its responsibility the determination of neglect of children by their parents or by others in the community. It was a fact-finding agency that carried a police function, in the sense of making investigations when complaints had come to it that children were not properly cared for. It was supported by the Community Fund and worked with all the sectarian and public agencies. If it could establish the fact of neglect, cruelty or immorality, it brought the situation to the Juvenile Court and placed in the court's hands the responsibility for planning for the children involved. Usually the Court referred these children to the three sectarian agencies for placement or planning. This private agency has since been merged with the Family and Children's Society of Baltimore, and now forms the Legal Protective Division of that

* Presented at League's program, National Conference of Social Work, Cleveland, Ohio, June, 1949.

Society. It is still the only social agency in Baltimore which accepts complaints from the community. It makes investigations of these complaints, but it also offers parents help in changing the situations if they want that help.

In 1943, the Baltimore Juvenile Court was reorganized. It became a court of record and is now one of the Circuit Courts, known as the Circuit Court for Juvenile Causes, with full and exclusive jurisdiction over all children up to sixteen. Under its law, the Court has full responsibility for delinquent children. When a child appearing before the Court is found to be delinquent, the Court can commit the child to an institution, place him on probation, or commit him to the State Department of Public Welfare. When a child appears before the Court and is found to be dependent or neglected, the Court has no alternative but to commit him to the Department of Public Welfare. Upon commitment, the Court has no further jurisdiction and the child becomes the responsibility of the public welfare agency.

In order to fulfill the purpose implied in the law and to meet the needs of the "neglected" child, the Baltimore Department of Public Welfare, in October, 1943, offered a new service known as "Protective Service for Children." It must be remembered, then, that this service had its roots in law and involved children who had already been adjudicated by a court of law as neglected.

From the beginning, the power and the dynamic of the commitment were recognized, although we have not always known how to use this power and dynamic. It was recognized, too, from the beginning, that *nothing helpful or even fundamentally protective can happen to a neglected child unless his parents take some responsibility for making this possible.* It is around this very core of the problem that our focus has changed, shifted and sharpened up what we have done in offering this service.

During the first few years, this service was located in and offered as a family service. We recognized that a protective service is a service to parents to help them change the situation for their children. Since our agency then had a Family Division, the Protective Service was located there. As we began to examine the services of our Family Division, and realized that its primary function was that of public assistance, we acknowledged this fact and called it the Public Assistance Division. Obviously, then, this Protective Service did not belong there. Neither could it rightfully be located in our Children's Division, whose primary and basic service is foster care to children, and where the agency must begin with what is involved in separation of children from their parents.

I should like to digress a moment here and discuss the problem of attempting to classify all services as either family services or children's services. When we set up our Protective Service for Children as a family service, we fell into the trap of saying such things as, "This service is concerned not only with the committed child but with all children in the family." Frequently only one child had been before the Court. Particularly was this true when a child, because neglected, resorted to delinquent behavior as one way of rebelling against the parents who were neglecting him. Thus, if there were other children in the home, we felt we were equally concerned about them as about the child who was actually committed to the Department. We rationalized by saying that we did not work with the child directly, but offered the parents a service for the protection of all their children. Parents did challenge our right to be concerned in planning for children not before the Court, but we countered that we were concerned with the total family situation since this was a family service. It is true that if children had to be placed, the Department of Public Welfare had to take the responsibility for filing the petition against any child in the family not already committed, and often the Department of Public Welfare was saved embarrassment by a social-minded Juvenile Court which accepted, perhaps too readily, the agency's recommendations and findings.

Principles of Protective Service

The significant factor in this development was the lack of clarity as to agency focus and function. While the intent and objectives may have been sound, in operation we often lost our location. At one moment we seemed identified with all the fundamental purposes of a family service and its goals of strengthening and preserving family life. At another time we shifted, and were concerned with what resources were available to make this family life possible. I do not want to minimize the importance of and need for adequate income, adequate housing, etc., and the rightness of concern that children be given every opportunity possible for health and decent standards of living.

Where we lost our location, however, was in not being clear that the service was to the *parents*, and that we had to offer it in such a way that they could use it toward a constructive change in their situation. We had to help them to become aware of their own role in the situation which may have been due to previous inability or unwillingness to assume parental responsibility. We had to challenge them to see how their present attack on a recurring predicament could be any different from those they had made before. We

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Mary E. Boretz

ON August 28th of this year the children of our country, perhaps even of the world, lost one of their best friends. Mary E. Boretz, possessed of a peculiar sensitivity to the needs of all people, had devoted almost her entire life to helping others. Her special concern was children whom she felt could not speak out for themselves. There was no child, no matter how rich or how poor, how advantaged or how handicapped, whose welfare was not of deep concern to her.

From 1923 to 1926, she served as a member of the board of the Child Welfare League of America and remained one of its staunch supporters throughout the years. In the fall of 1946, for a brief period, she acted as consultant for the League to executives of its member agencies.

Her special skill and energies went to helping children whom the force of circumstances decreed should be removed from their own homes. Concern for this particular group of children probably grew out of her own none-too-happy childhood. The product of a broken home, Mary Boretz had herself spent several years of her adolescence in an orphan asylum. Her reaction to institutional living was heightened by her first professional experience as a staff member of a congregate children's institution. She became convinced that all children are better off as part of a family. If for one reason or another they must be removed from their own home, they should be placed in a foster home. When she first articulated this idea it was nothing short of revolutionary. It is largely due to her never-flagging zeal that the theory is now so generally accepted that children thrive best in a family, that institutional care should be available for children who need the special treatment possible in such a setting.

Thirty-five years ago, placing children in a boarding home and receiving money for the care of children was looked down upon. Mary Boretz—always frail of body but the more aware of other people's needs—had the unquenchable fire of a crusader. Her entire life was dedicated to making a better life for children. She led the fight to persuade the Board of her own agency and the community at large that children need individual love and care, and that it is a wonderful and generous thing to open your home to another person's child. She worked with every available means to publicize her philosophy of child care, using all media of voice, of pen, of Boards and committees, of local and national organizations to spread her gospel of child care. It is no wonder that the practice of placing children in foster homes became generally acceptable. A bird's-eye picture of all that foster home care was able to accomplish for children, as envisioned by Mary Boretz, was truly exciting.

The first foster home placements she helped to establish were of short duration—for children whom the institution could not accept because of their age. Soon it became evident, however, that youngsters placed in foster homes should not be removed arbi-

trarily for commitment to an institution. She saw the foster home placement as particularly flexible in meeting the needs of children. A family of children need no longer be separated because institutions served only boys, or girls, or limited age groups. Suitable homes were also found for children handicapped physically or emotionally.

Mary Boretz was always in the vanguard for standards of good child welfare. She was early to recognize the value of professional training of social workers and the stability that a sound union relationship could give an agency. Skilled service with the child under care, their families, and the community, could shorten the time a child must be separated from its own family. She was justifiably proud of the turnover of youngsters in her own agency—the Foster Home Department of the Jewish Child Care Association. She worked steadfastly to improve the opportunities for training of qualified staff and students. To enable the total planning for children, an adoption service was inaugurated within her agency, primarily for service to the children already in care.

Miss Boretz was one of the first to see that it was essential for the public and private interests to work together in behalf of children. She saw that both services were mutually dependent. She assumed leadership in working out an acceptable arrangement between the Department of Welfare and private agencies for sharing the responsibility of underprivileged children in New York City.

About fifteen years ago Miss Boretz persuaded a foundation to make a grant for an experiment in placing infants in foster homes. This program faced a great deal of opposition. Its failure might have jeopardized some of the hard-won gains in foster home care. Today no one recommends that babies remain in institutions. We know they thrive when given individual and consistent mothering.

I could make a long catalogue of the improvements in the care of children for which Mary Boretz worked. As the years went by, her thoughts were for all children needing care outside their own homes, regardless of the country of their origin or their economic status. Her enlightened ideas helped many children displaced because of the war to find permanent happiness. She firmly believed that foster homes could be found in spite of the war-induced shortage, and her faith was rewarded with success.

Mary Boretz's program of activities was never static. She shared her convictions and enthusiasm with her friends and associates, so that it was always an exciting and satisfying experience to work with her. Those of us, both lay and professional, who were close to Mary Boretz, were constantly called upon to implement and supplement her ideas. She had a remarkable quality for sharing her thinking and building co-operatively. Her spirit of service will always be with us, and I hope we can continue to help children more effectively because of having known Mary E. Boretz.

MRS. RICHARD J. BERNHARD

First Vice-President, Child Welfare League of America

INTRODUCING OUR NEW TRUSTEES

ON October 17 and 18 the League's Board of Directors met in its first formal meeting since the election of new Board members and officers at the annual meeting in June. It is with pride that we introduce through the pages of *CHILD WELFARE* the new names on the trustees' roster of the League.

George Fahey, Seattle, Washington, brings to the League Board not only a thoroughgoing background of lay leadership in the West, but also personal experience in the field of child welfare in the states of Washington and Missouri. He has been chairman of the Council of Social Agencies of Seattle and King County and is an officer of the board of our member agency, the Washington Children's Home Society.

Mrs. Herbert Field Fisher, Hartford, Connecticut, active board member, civic leader, and counselor in agency and community organization affairs, happily returns to the Board at this time for another term. The League Board and its member agencies are happy to thus honor a distinguished citizen of Connecticut whose vision and leadership are constantly in demand in her home state. She is presently chairman of the Youth Commission in Connecticut, and has been active in planning for the White House Conference on Children and Youth.

Shelby M. Harrison, New York City, served for 16 years as General Director of the Russell Sage Foundation. In that capacity he gave broad and inspired leadership to the development of health and welfare programs, both public and private, throughout the United States. Long an expert in the techniques and philosophy of social surveying, the standard he has set in that area has made a great and lasting impact on the development of the social sciences. His presence on the Board will bring a ripe judgment and seasoned wisdom to the League's deliberations and policies.

C. Ellis Hennican, New Orleans, Louisiana, has played a large part in the development of good services for children in his state during the past 10 years. In 1939 he was selected by the Governor to assume temporary duties as Commissioner of Public Welfare, and, following the reorganization program which developed under his leadership, he became Chairman of the State Welfare Board, an office which he continued to occupy until 1947. Mr. Hennican is a member of the board of the Associated Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. He brings to the League Board not only the clear-cut wisdom of an attorney but also a sincere feeling for children everywhere.

Katharine F. Lenroot, Washington, D. C., one of

the nation's outstanding leaders in the field of child welfare, was for years Associate Chief of the Children's Bureau, later becoming its Chief, which post she still holds with great distinction. Miss Lenroot has also contributed substantially to the development of child welfare in South America, in England and on the Continent. From 1927 to 1933 she served as a member of the League's Board and for one year as its First Vice-President. Her presence on the Board will be another clear indication of the partnership between the Child Welfare League and the Children's Bureau.

Mrs. George L. West, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has been one of the outstanding spokesmen for children in Pittsburgh, where she is chairman of the Family and Child Care Division of the Federation of Social Agencies. Mrs. West is a member of the National Board of the YWCA. She is secretary of the Family and Children's Service of Pittsburgh, a member agency of the Child Welfare League. In addition to other national and local responsibilities, she is also a member of the Public Charities Association, the Intercultural Council and the National Council of Christians and Jews.

Mrs. Ray W. Willoughby, San Angelo, Texas, is vice-chairman of the Texas Committee on Children and Youth and has given leadership to the development of children's programs throughout the state of Texas. She was active in the creation of a school of social work for Texas and has represented her state at the Attorney General's Conference on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency. Mrs. Willoughby brings to national children's services a keen interest and knowledge of social welfare programs.

LEONARD W. MAYO
President

New Members

Jewish Children's Service
78 Marietta Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia
Mrs. Ethel Copelan, Executive Director

Mercy Home
1101 North 52nd Place
Birmingham, Alabama
Miss Katharine Rowe, Superintendent

Friendship House
2000 Adams Avenue
Scranton 9, Pennsylvania
Mr. Frank F. Maloney, Executive Director

New Provisional

Lowell Day Nursery Association
119 Hall Street
Lowell, Massachusetts
Miss Catherine E. Valteau, Director

A PLACE FOR DAY CARE

Introducing a Column on Day Care

DAY CARE, that erstwhile stepchild of the social welfare field and newcomer to the field of education, is, in its emerging maturity, slowly but steadily winning a recognized place for itself in the network of community resources for children.

For more than one hundred years, Day Care for children has been offered to families of economic and social need in most large cities throughout the country. A unique program with emphasis on care for the child as a member of his family, the modern Day Care agency combines the custodial aspects implicit in the term "care" with the educational developmental values growing out of research in child development.

These modern pioneer nurseries are unfortunately fewer in number at the present time than during the recent war, but they are hearteningly stronger and more dynamic. The Child Welfare League of America now has a membership of 265 agencies, of which 18 are Day Care agencies either of provisional or of accredited member status. Several new applications are pending study and one is being considered by the Membership Committee. These nurseries, by their membership in the Child Welfare League of America, have aligned themselves with those who are striving for new insight into the dynamics of human growth, for new techniques with which to meet the needs of children and their families as our expanding knowledge of those needs emerges from research and practice. They have demonstrated their concern for better service, not only for the children under their care but for all of the children of their community, of the nation and of the world.

Communities have responded to this broadened scope of Day Care by an increased use of the Day Care agency as a supplement to other services. Psychiatric clinics, family agencies, public schools, hospitals, public health centers and private physicians are now using the Day Care centers as a referral resource. Research by anthropologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, educators and mental hygiene groups is being carried on in Day Care centers, and their use as a training center for students in the fields of health, education and social work is becoming an accepted and widespread practice.

The information service library and consultant staff of the Child Welfare League of America have been made aware of the broadened scope of day nurseries through the inquiries and requests for

help coming to us. In terms of frequency of inquiry, these are the concerns of Day Care programs at the present time:

Casework Service

Member agencies, recognizing the importance of this phase of their service, want to know what other agencies have such service, how it is provided, how it is interpreted to the community. They want help in defining the role of the caseworker and examples of programs where integration of this service with that of the teacher and pediatrician is an accomplished fact.

Personnel Practices

The employment base, including hours, conditions of employment, sick leave, vacations, leaves of absence and salary scale for staff are factors directly affecting children through their effect on staff morale. Standards for teaching personnel are also of growing concern, particularly since many states have limited facilities for training of nursery school teachers.

Per Capita Costs

Comparable per capita costs on a regional basis, in terms of other cities of the same population, size or economic level; in relation to quality of program—these are statistics that are constantly being supplied by the League. Agencies have used these figures to advantage with Boards of Directors, Community Chests, Councils of Social Agencies and the public.

Standards for Licensing

An increasing number of requests come in for copies of licensing codes, minimum standards for Day Care agencies, etc., from State Departments of Social Welfare, Departments of Health or Departments of Education, signifying an encouraging trend toward public responsibility for protection of all children.

And now **CHILD WELFARE** is offering to Day Care a column of its own, a permanent place of its own, a space to be devoted every month to the concerns of Day Care agencies. The problems, the solutions to these problems, the new programs and the experiments will appear here, written, we hope, by the staffs and Boards of the Child Welfare League of America Day Care members. We will bring to you, when available, new thinking, research, pertinent information from allied fields, but the vitality of this column will stem from the contributions of directors, teachers, caseworkers, nurses, pediatricians and Board members of the day nurseries.

Comments as well as contributions from you are essential if this column is to fulfill its purpose of creating a new medium for exchange of information on better ways to meet children's needs through Day Care.

DOROTHY H. BEERS
Day Care Consultant

THE POSITIVE APPROACH TO PROTECTIVE SERVICE

(Continued from page 9)

had to assist them to look into their situation and discover in it resources they had failed to use.

To give this service effectively, then, we had to re-examine the core of the service, and thus determine its proper location in the agency structure. As we came to a realization that the parent who has neglected his children is negligent (and I want to repeat with emphasis *negligent*), we came to the realization that this fact was the core of protective service. In most of the literature on this subject, such parents are usually referred to as "neglectful," and to some of you the word "negligent" may seem weaker, and, perhaps, not as descriptive of what has happened. However, what I want to stress is the fact that the negligent parent is, by Webster's definition, "guilty of, or given to, neglect; heedless, culpably careless, showing lack of attention." Furthermore, the negligent parent has committed an act that has violated and affronted the community mores, and the community has the right to hold that person responsible for his act. The community invests the agency with the authority to hold the parent to account for the care of his children.

There is no denying that to many this may seem cruel, harsh and lacking in understanding of the plight in which the person finds himself and of the circumstances which led to that plight. Nevertheless, we understand through our experience that having one's children committed to an agency as neglected makes the parent feel guilty. Neglect carries with it the connotation of failure and omission, which even the most disinterested, careless and bad parent finds hard to face. In instance after instance we have parents saying to us, "I knew that things had gotten awfully bad for this to come into court. I was bad." They, then, have described in their individual terms how this badness felt to them and how it affected their children. It is no service to the parent to deny the reality or to attempt to make it right. Neglect is a serious problem, and while the negligent parent may want to deny responsibility for his part in it, we know that negligent parents feel miserable and are dissatisfied with their lives; and that, at first, to change seems beyond their capacity.

It is only when the agency is firm and clear, and holds parents to their responsibility, that something does happen.

No parents truly want to stay in this state of badness. It may be that parents finally come to a recognition and acceptance of the fact that they cannot and do not wish to continue with their children in the close relationship of everyday family life. Such parents can be helped to give up their children because separation

is right for them and for their children; and they should not be forced to stay with their children because we, in our zeal for family life, want that for all children.

The Use of Authority

Where, then, could protective service rightfully be placed in the agency? We recognized that the focus of the service had to be on offering help to negligent parents in order to enable them to take responsibility for the neglect of their children. It was clear that this was not a family service, nor was it a service to children. It was a service that must be predicated on the authority vested in the agency by the commitment, and by the authority of the community that wanted something different for neglected children.

The Baltimore Department of Public Welfare had another service with the same authoritative base: a service to promiscuous girls and women. The Protective Service to Girls does not deal with promiscuity or prostitution as being right or wrong, but rather as being against the law—as being ways of living which can and do get girls and women into a great deal of difficulty. It is a direct casework service to girls and women who have been arrested, or who have been involved in promiscuous behavior. The service is predicated on the belief that human beings have great capacity for change. It is an offer of help to the delinquent girl that engages her will to change, and is based on the expectation that she *can* do this if she wants to move away from her old way of living. The inherent authority of this service is the firm, living force against which a delinquent girl can find her own strength, can test her will to change. Here there is recognition that only as the girl gets a sense of her own worth, only as she can take possession of her own self, can she move into happy, useful community living.*

We considered the nature of the dynamic that helps parents move either to accepting their parental role or to being able to separate from their children. Our experience has led us to believe that we must begin with the authority of the commitment, or with the authority of the rights of the community if the case has been referred by another service in the Department. We decided to place the Protective Service to Children in the same division of the agency as the Protective Service to Girls, which was also operating in an authoritative setting.

The core of the Protective Service to Children is to hold parents to change the situation for their children. The commitment is to the agency, and assumes that children have been so neglected that separation from their parents may be indicated. Hence parents, from the very first, must begin with the fact that they want to do something different for their children. There is no denial that the

* *A Case Work Approach to Sex Delinquents*. Rosa Wessel, Editor. Pennsylvania School of Social Work of the University of Pennsylvania. Copyright 1947.

commitment means that they have been bad parents—they feel bad and must want to do something about it. If this is not true and they will not recognize it, they cannot be helped to change the situation. Help is given parents in getting some sense of their part in their children's situation; and until they get an awareness of and take responsibility for the situation, nothing different will happen.

As has already been indicated, the service to negligent parents is initiated by an outside force: the concern on the part of the community, through court or agency, about what is happening to children. While help is not being sought voluntarily by these parents, there is recognition of the parents' opportunity to take account of their parental relationships, and to decide and act on what they can do about the situation in order to retain parental responsibility. To afford parents this opportunity requires regard on the agency's part for the parents as individuals, and for the valid choice they have between maintaining a satisfactory home for their children, or separating from their children because they cannot or do not wish to continue with them in a close family relationship. The agency cannot have a predetermined goal either of holding the family together or of separating children from their parents. The agency must recognize, however, those situations where flagrant neglect and the lack of any semblance of a home indicate separation and make placement of children necessary at once. Children cannot be permitted to live in tents, trucks or trailers, or in homes so infested with rats and vermin that their very lives are endangered.

Protective service is offered to negligent parents where there is some resemblance to a home, even though the situation may be bad and the home lacking in some of the facilities considered necessary for proper care of children. Although there is a risk of some continuing hardship for children, the risk is accepted because of the importance to the child of parental relationships and responsibility. On the other hand, where the neglect is flagrant and obvious, or where it has extended for a long period of time, the community must be able to accept separation of children from their parents.

Indeed, in many such situations, parents can be helped to take their children back only after they have experienced a period of separation, and have had an opportunity to come to terms with themselves as to whether they can and are willing to accept the responsibility of establishing and maintaining a home.

What is present in either event and cannot be denied nor overlooked is the fact that when a parent has been negligent, there has been a shift in the balance of responsibility. A third party, the social agency, is now in the picture. The agency's participation means the abridgment of some of the parental rights without release from parental responsibility. When the agency enters the picture, something different must happen: there must be a change in one direction or the other.

Time as a Dynamic

With full recognition of parental rights, and the recognition of individual capacity and the ability to change, an unlimited time cannot be allowed for a change to occur in situations affecting the care of children when parents have been negligent. I am not minimizing the fact that to give this service requires patience—endless and enduring patience—and faith in human beings and in their inherent ability to change and grow under the most adverse circumstances. I do believe, however, that when parents have been negligent and have permitted their children to live under unfavorable, calamitous situations, that the time in which change must occur is a very powerful dynamic in bringing about that change.

I think it is unfair to ask the individual parents to take full responsibility for their rate of progress. On the other hand, it is equally important to bear in mind the principle that parents should be given their complete parental responsibility as soon as they are able to repossess it. There must be a termination of the commitment to the agency, since no parent can act as a parent under an enforced abridgment of his parental rights over a long period of time.

In the Baltimore Department of Public Welfare, we are now saying that the movement for change must begin at once, and that in six months there should be such a marked shift in the situation that, in most instances, the service could then end.

How does an agency measure factors determining whether there has been sufficient change so that it can say that children may remain in the home? The agency must accept the fact that such change will not be complete; that if adequate housing is not available in the community, for example, the agency cannot create such facilities. From the very beginning we have recognized that a home visit is necessary, because the agency must know for itself the conditions under which the family is living. We have shifted, however, in the purpose, timing and spacing of home visits.

While formerly a home visit was made very early in the contact between the family and the agency, regular office visits were set up as meeting one of the requirements of the service. It was easy to overemphasize the principle that the office visit was for the purpose of helping the parent sustain a relationship with us, and that his getting to the office and keeping his appointments was the first evidence of his taking responsibility for the situation. What we see more clearly, now, is that the service is to the parents because they have neglected their children, and that therefore the parents must be held to giving some evidence of better care for their children.

Such progress, we now think, is better evidenced through the home visit than the office visit. The same focus still holds: the kind of responsibility the parents are taking in changing the situation for their children. We think that responsibility is more properly centered in how the parents prepare for the worker's visit, than in whether they can bring themselves to the agency office. Do parents plan for the worker's visit? Do they assure themselves that it will be possible to have the interview in the home, or does the worker find that even though the time of the visit is known, an interrupted interview cannot take place in the home because nothing

has been done by the parents to plan to make this possible? Moreover, the home visit seems more appropriate because of the very goal of the service: keeping a home together, if possible.

Other requirements are made of the parents to show whether they are not only concerned about their children but are doing something about that concern. If the child needs medical attention, we help the parents to seek and get that care. If the child is not attending school, it is the parents' responsibility to go to the school and find out what they can do to get the child into school and support him in remaining there.

Each individual situation may require some different emphasis, but in every situation the agency operates on the same basis; *i.e.*, the protection which parents must provide for their children.

Children require of their parents: reasonable physical care, including a decent place to live, sufficient food and suitable clothing; consistent attention so that they are not left alone for long periods of time; support in regular school attendance; and control and discipline including knowing where the children are and what they are doing.

Conclusion

I could cite case illustration after case illustration as evidence that parents can be helped to give children what they need in the way of care and protection. One woman will say,

"I am my own woman now, and see how I can do something for my children."

Another, who had been not only neglecting her children but starving herself, said, as she achieved an idea of what she was doing to herself and her children,

"It seemed as though I was not wanting to live and take care of my children, although I said I wanted to take care of them and I know how important they were to me. It took the court experience to know how bad I was letting things get for myself and the children."

As she ended with the service, she could say,

"This was a real chance for me to get things straightened out for myself, and it has made things much better for my children."

Always, the focus of protective service is to offer help to parents to give their children the kind of care and protection which children need and the community requires. The service holds parents to the requirements of the law and to the satisfaction of the rightful demands of children. The service uses the value of legal authority positively. There is recognition and acceptance by the agency of the fact that negligent parents feel bad. Similarly, there is recognition that where there is badness, there is strength, too. The service endeavors to engage that strength so that parents can be helped to discover and reclaim the resources which they have in themselves, and to use these resources with greater satisfaction to themselves, for the benefit of their children and of the community.

SOCIAL WORK AND THE COURT

Mazie F. Rappaport

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Protective Services Division

Department of Public Welfare

Baltimore, Maryland

With this article we conclude the prepared comments on The Court and the Children's Agency, which appeared in the July issue of CHILD WELFARE. Further comments are invited.

I have read and re-read the papers on "The Court and the Children's Agency"* by Alan Keith-Lucas and Judge Wylegala with a deep feeling of gratitude and admiration. These papers make it patently clear that the "overlapping, usurpation of prerogative and competition" between the social agency and the court must yield to "intelligent working together." Mr. Keith-Lucas says frankly that unless this is so, "court and agency are inclined to try to neutralize or to manage each other." He sees the problem clearly and

has the courage and boldness to state succinctly what is the responsibility of the juvenile court and what is the responsibility of the social agency, charging each with clarifying its function and with discharging its responsibility skillfully and forthrightly. Mr. Keith-Lucas has posed the problem and clarified it. It is up to the juvenile courts and child welfare agencies to pick it up and work on it.

What is so appealing about the point of view expressed in both of these papers is that they hold the court to being what it is—a court—and, likewise, they insist that the social agency be what the community intended it to be—a social agency: a service to people in trouble, to help the person—adult or

* "Social Work and the Court in the Protection of Children," by Alan Keith-Lucas, p. 3; "Children's Courts, An Effective Aid to Social Agencies," by Judge Victor B. Wylegala, p. 6. CHILD WELFARE, July, 1949.

child—become a happy, responsible citizen in the community.

Juvenile Courts are Legal Bodies

I agree with Mr. Keith-Lucas that we should not worry about the swing back to a more legalistic juvenile court. Perhaps we need that swing back and as social agencies should even encourage it. Judge Wylegala points out clearly that "courts are not self-made or self-ruled entities which can readily accommodate themselves to the wishes or desires of individuals or groups. Courts must be measured or appraised in terms of performance under the laws creating them and not according to standards advocated for them by experts." This sets the court—including the juvenile court—in law. "White House Conferences are useful," says Judge Wylegala, "in developing thought for improving procedures, legislation, etc.—but advancing a principle does not mean that courts can follow it before their laws are amended to conform." What this can mean for social work is continuous activity to improve the laws concerning the rights of children.

What both Mr. Keith-Lucas and Judge Wylegala want is what we all want—our courts and social agencies to be as clear, firm, dependable and reliable as they can be. What we must insure is a way for each to be as creative as it can be within its particular framework.

It seems to me that not only do we need clarity so that there will be "legal framework" and a setting for "submitting our judgments to a democratic review" but that we must also be concerned about another kind of framework—an ethical framework, and we must create a setting for working together in a professional relationship. I doubt that much that goes on between juvenile courts and child welfare agencies could be identified as professional and truly ethical. Basic to working together between professions—indeed between all people—is a code of ethics. What we need to remember is that informal confused action is not ethical action and what we need to admit is that as we witness the working together of court and social agency, we see great confusion of function and duplication of activity.

Judge Wylegala has something to say about the way the social agency seems to the judge. He points out that many social workers are untrained, that social workers do not always "know how and when to use the court and how to provide the resources to accomplish what the court orders." He goes on to state the rights of children—God-given and clearly put forth in the Declaration of Independence. He describes the court which is neither too legalistic nor

"too social"; he holds firmly to the right of the parents to appeal and quotes from a New York State Court of Appeals decision which says in part, "There must be a reasonably definite charge. The customary rules of evidence shown by long experience as essential to getting at the truth with reasonable certainty in civil trials must be adhered to. The finding of fact must rest on the preponderance of evidence adduced under those rules." This opinion continues, "Hearsay, opinion, gossip, bias, prejudice, trends of hostile neighborhood feeling, the hopes and fears of social workers are all sources of error and have no more place in children's courts than in any other court."

The Partnership of Court and Social Agency

Social workers will not like having their activities labeled as hopes and fears, nor will they like being coupled with neighborhood prejudice and hearsay, but they will not quarrel with Judge Wylegala as he goes on to say that "the court decides questions of fact on evidence supplied by trained social workers and then prescribes recommended treatment which it (the court) believes will best accomplish its purpose of conserving the welfare of the child." Here is a judge who pleads for mutual respect between court and social agency and then boldly charges social work with making use, when necessary, of the authority and power of the children's or juvenile court to compel the protection of every child's American heritage.

What we should aim for is what Mr. Keith-Lucas refers to as "real partnership between the court and the social agency." I like his use of the word, "partnership" rather than the overworked terms "teams" and "teamwork." Teamwork can feel only good to the team, but all too often it feels collusive and predetermined to the person involved—in this case, to the child or his parents.

It is interesting to stop and consider for a moment why we find ourselves caught in this situation that has developed between the court and the social agencies.

Role of the Juvenile Court

This is the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the first juvenile court in the United States. For years before that, social agencies had been bending their best efforts toward taking children out of criminal courts. The juvenile court stands as the spot in which every juvenile offender is to have particular and individualized treatment to meet his special needs. This was the goal for which the social agencies fought. They begot the juvenile court and helped it to develop but they have never separated from it enough

to allow it to become the entity it needs to be—truly a juvenile court. This separation must take place if both the juvenile court and the child welfare agency are to use the potential capacity with which each has been endowed. Neither has to give up anything; each must take and possess its own unique obligation.

Perhaps some of the problem rests with the court which has been unable or unwilling to be a court socialized but different and apart from the social agency. Lest there be misunderstanding, this does not mean that the juvenile court should not be socially minded—for it must be socially minded, even socially biased, but it must remain a juvenile court—a place of adjudication where the young delinquent has his “day in court”—different from the adult’s day in court—but still with due process. That is the intent and purpose of the juvenile court and we, as social workers, should insist that this purpose be met; we should honor and respect it when this requirement is met. It *is possible* for courts and social agencies to have mutual respect but only when there is something to trust and respect. There cannot be this feeling when courts are ordering social agencies about or abdicating to them and when social agencies try to take over the job of the court or surrender and bow to it.

There has been too much cajoling and coaxing of the courts to do what the social agency wants it to do. Too many decisions have been personal rather than professionally individualized. What are social workers doing when they “go to talk it over with the judge”? Do we permit the judge to make the social agency an arm or extension of the court? If we do, then we, as social workers, are responsible for what is recognized, at least by Mr. Keith-Lucas, as confusion. It is understandable how this confusion has come about, but it is wasteful, even hurtful to have it continue. Social agencies have much to undo in this informal, confused, diffuse activity known as “working with the court.”

Role of the Protective Agency

I agree fully with Mr. Keith-Lucas that the social agency has the responsibility of giving a casework service to the child and his parents. In doing this, it will be presenting facts and plans to the court; these must be facts that will be helpful to the court in making its own decision, not recommendations or pleas; the plans must be those which are, as Mr. Keith-Lucas says, “the plans they (the social agency) believe would ensure the child’s right.” He speaks of the social worker as “advocate for the child,” but not an official part of the court. The social agency has further obligation in its role as “advocate for all

children” to call to the attention of the community unmet needs and to press hard for the meeting of these needs. It will not insist, however, that the court move out of its role as a court in a particular case to meet these unmet needs which must be taken care of more soundly, permanently and consistently by the modification of existing laws or by better children’s services within the social agencies.

The social agency’s reason for being is to help people to define their purpose, their desires and needs, to help them become free and happy people, able to live within the law because they are secure enough to live with other people and with limits. If the laws are bad, if the courts are inefficient or anti-social, that is of real concern to the social agency, but no great or lasting good will come of the social agency moving over into trying to be a court.

As social agencies, we must say clearly and in understandable language what we are set up to do and what we are able to do; as social agencies, we *do know how* to give a casework service skillfully, but we *do not know how* to adjudicate the case, protecting the legal rights of all those involved. We would do well to recognize that promptly.

Those of us who have been working in protective services know well that law is freeing, not limiting; that authority is a powerful dynamic in casework; we know the importance of the separateness of court and agency; we want the court to be a court. We know only too well what chaos results for client as well as agency when the court cannot or will not make a decision. We know, too, how powerless we, as social workers, are ultimately when we overuse and abuse power and take over for the court. I know from years of experience in a protective service that “it works better” when the able and secure court and the skillful and efficient social agency each allows to the other that which belongs to it.

There is plenty for each to do, indeed, more than any of us can do in the foreseeable future. Our final goal is the same—better things for children. Let us each, then, court and social agency, stay with a specific purpose, admit that we are different and then solemnly apply our talent and skill to make our juvenile courts and our child welfare agencies better, good enough to serve the serious purpose for which each was created.

We owe a debt to Mr. Keith-Lucas and Judge Wylegala for their challenging papers, which put to all of us the responsibility for clarifying our specific roles. Our security as court or social agency rests on the firm conviction that each has an obligation to discharge his responsibility and to leave to the other his own area of competence—and let there be competence!

CHANGES IN LEAGUE STAFF

The League announces the resignation from our staff of Mary Keeley, our consultant on Institutes and Conferences. We are proud of her new assignment as Child Welfare representative on the staff of ECA in Greece. The League's membership as well as the staff will feel her loss keenly.

It gives us great satisfaction to be able to announce simultaneously that Mrs. Dorothy H. Beers, who for the past year has been on the part-time staff of the League giving consultant service to our day-care services, will become a full-time member as of January 1, 1950. A portion of her time will be allotted to our educational and institute program. She will also consult with our regional conference committees.

LEAGUE CONFERENCE PLANS

National Conference

Mr. Gunnar Dybwad, Supervisor Children's Division, Michigan State Department of Social Welfare, Lansing, Michigan, is Chairman of the League's program at the National Conference of Social Work to be held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, April 23 to 29, 1950. League headquarters will be at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. The Co-chairman is Miss Ora Pendleton, Director, the County Agency Department, Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

In line with the reorganization of the schedule for the entire National Conference of Social Work, the League meetings will be held all day Tuesday and all day Thursday, April 25 and 27, 1950.

While plans are well under way for the League's program, we nevertheless urgently request that you send us information regarding research, administrative studies and new projects which have been undertaken. Regional conference chairmen would, we know, be delighted to receive similar suggestions and information for regional conference programs.

Regional Conferences

The Eastern Regional Conference will be held in New York City February 27 and 28, 1950, at the Roosevelt Hotel. The Chairman is Miss Margaret Barbee, Executive Director, Sheltering Arms Children's Service, New York.

The New England Regional Conference will be under the chairmanship of Mr. Robert M. Mulford, General Secretary, Massachusetts S.P.C.C., Boston. The place and dates will be announced later.

The Southern Regional Conference will be held in Shreveport, Louisiana, and is scheduled tentatively for March 6, 7 and 8, 1950. Miss Inez M. Baker, Supervisor of the Children's Division, New Orleans Department of Public Welfare, is chairman.

The Central Regional Conference (formerly called the Ohio Valley Regional Conference) will be held in Toledo, Ohio, March 16, 17 and 18, 1950. Headquarters are at the Commodore Perry Hotel. Mr. Wendell F. Johnson, Director, The Child and Family Agency of Toledo, is chairman.

The Midwest Regional Conference is scheduled to be held in Minneapolis, the tentative dates being June 5, 6 and 7, 1950. Headquarters will be the Nicollet Hotel. The chairman is Mr. Clark W. Blackburn, Executive Secretary, Family and Children's Service, Minneapolis.

READERS' FORUM

Dear Editor:

I wonder if many who work in or around institutions have as little idea as I had until recently of the type of thinking that is being expressed in groups such as those which met for the Institute for Executives of Child Caring Institutions sponsored jointly by the Child Welfare League of America and the School of Public Welfare and Social Work at Chapel Hill each summer.

I attended this year's meeting thinking that, as a public welfare person and one trained more formally in social work than most institution executives (many of whom had come to this field from the church, recreation or agriculture), I could probably be at best an observer. I could not have been more totally wrong. Never have I spent a week in which I felt more involved, 15 hours a day through mealtimes, group meetings and "dormitory" discussions, in what was happening in the institutional field in the South.

This is no formal report of the institute. The following is representative of the convictions shared by this group of institution executives.

1. A realization of the changing role of the institution in the social structure and a willingness to re-think the programs of their respective institutions in relation to this change.
2. A deep conviction of the rights of parents to an opportunity to fulfill that role adequately and the meaning for the child when parents have that opportunity. I felt that many of us in public welfare would do a much better job if we could have something of this same depth of feeling.
3. A welcoming of the program of public foster care and a realization that neither public nor private could do the total job. Also some impatience with the slow growth of the public program.
4. An acceptance of the contribution of trained social workers, especially in work with parents. The problem of recruiting social workers was recognized.
5. The need to clarify responsibility between public and private agencies not in any competitive spirit but to add strength to work with children and parents. Here I again felt that we in the public welfare had much to learn and that the case material offered showed us up as being not too clear as to what our responsibilities were.

The genuineness of the conviction was evidenced in a complete lack of defensiveness about programs which were moving slowly. Not even once did I hear blame placed on a board or a church constituency for a slow movement or a single defensive remark despite the fact that the material being discussed was from the institutions themselves and was quite frequently criticized.

The whole experience raises in my mind the question of why when such stirrings are obvious in the institutional field and in an area not normally thought of as the most progressive the thirteen southern states—and if this stirring is attributable as I believe largely to the exchange of ideas in such groups, more has not been heard about it and similar groups have not been sponsored elsewhere or more publicized. The only criticism I have to make of this year's Institute was that, of thirteen states, only seven sent representatives. I wonder whether other readers of *CHILD WELFARE* think about the desirability and practicability of extending such projects.

This year the Institute was centered on relationships with departments of public welfare. Next year it is shifting its emphasis to the recruitment, training, supervision, and personnel management of staff. The subjects themselves would seem to echo a new and real concern for standards and co-operation in this business of caring for children.

ALAN KEITH-LUCAS

*Supervisor of Children's Services,
Louisiana State Department of Public Welfare*

BOOK NOTE

THE CHALLENGE OF PARENTHOOD, by Rudolf Dreikurs, M.D.
Duell, Sloan & Pearce, N. Y., 324 pp., \$3.50.

Dr. Dreikurs is a Viennese psychiatrist who has made his home in Chicago since 1939 and is Professor of Psychiatry at the Chicago Medical School. In Austria he was closely associated with Dr. Alfred Adler in the conducting of child guidance clinics. His Adlerian persuasion is evident throughout this book. This is not to be understood, however, as a narrowing of focus; on the contrary, it provides a sensible and stimulating frame of reference for a thoroughgoing presentation of the parents' job. I cannot do better than quote one of the most telling remarks to give an idea of the particular quality of the book (p. 37):

"The child has the choice of giving way to (his difficulties) or learning to overcome them. . . . The only factor that decides the issue is the *courage* with which the child approaches his problem. . . . The innate courage of a child, *unspoiled by faulty training*, is remarkably great. . . . A great many educators, professionals and laymen alike, are not aware of the importance of courage and hence disregard this fundamental need of the child. *They continually diminish the child's self-assurance*. All the many (and sometimes heterogeneous) errors of education converge at this point."

The book presents a philosophy of parenthood, and is aimed particularly at the attitudes current between the members of the family. The bulk of the book deals with the methods of training. First, what methods may be expected to succeed, and second the most common mistakes that produce trouble and why.

Specific training situations are then dealt with in order to illustrate the application of the principles evolved previously, and in order to permit more concrete advice. Follows a section on "the difficult child." The author shows clear insight into the mechanisms at work when the child's behavior becomes a cause for concern, and his organization of the material is remarkably lucid and easy to absorb. For example (p. 190):

"All disturbing behavior of the child is directed toward one of four possible goals. They represent his ideas about his relationship to others in the group. He tries to: (1) gain attention; (2) demonstrate his power; (3) punish or get even; (4) demonstrate his inadequacy."

This may well strike one as an unwarranted interpretation of the evidence and oversimplification. But the manner in which Dr. Dreikurs develops his thesis, showing how each of these goals is derived from the previous one, according to the relative lack in the environment of the possibilities for healthy growth, can hardly fail to carry the reader along with him. At the end are nine short case illustrations of the rehabilitation of children severely enough maladjusted to require brief therapy in a clinic setting.

If any criticism is to be made, it would be to the effect that the author has at times sacrificed, in the interest of forceful presentation, the nuances of parent-child interaction. The "challenge of parenthood" cannot be met successfully by the mind alone, without the heart. On page 63 we read:

"You will, for example, have great difficulty in training the child to wash his hands before meals unless you establish this habit at the earliest possible time, and then hold firmly to it, with no exceptions allowed. An order must be carried out in all cases to which it applies. . . . A child acquires habits of order and cleanliness only through the consistency of established rules. If he is not *always* obliged to straighten up his books and papers after studying, he will feel that he does not need to comply with sporadic commands to this effect."

Folks would give their children a rather bad time of it if they tried to apply that literally.

Dr. Dreikurs, of course, would not want "consistency" to be taken for "rigidity." In the social sciences, "always" nearly always means "nearly always." It is one of the fine points in his book that the natural consequences of a child's action are its own best reward or punishment, and that parental interference with this is usually a misguided overtraining (p. 74):

"Wherever possible you must let the children learn by experience. This can be done only if you learn restraint. It is not your duty to do everything for the child. Such tendencies spring only from undue fear or from a desire to prove your own importance and power."

ARIEL MENGARINI, M.D.

Council Child Development Center, New York City

Some Essentials For Board Membership

From League Publication "*The Two R's—Responsibility and Representation*"

First Commandment: Measure the job you undertake as an agency trustee.

Begin at once to find out something about the job undertaken; learn much about it before you come on the Board.

Second Commandment: Measure up to the job you undertake as an agency trustee.

Attend meetings. Blaze a new trail. Be businesslike; it takes money and effort to run any kind of agency. We have a right to expect that money will be used to greatest advantage, that the agency will be a smooth-functioning, businesslike organization.

Third Commandment: Learn to distinguish between Board functions and administrative functions.

There is nothing that creates more confusion, misunderstandings and heartaches, with eventual loss of efficiency than for Board members to inject themselves into the day-by-day operation of a social agency.

Essential Board functions: Employ a well-informed executive director; determine general program and policies in the light of changing needs; secure adequate support; and interpret agency to public and public to agency.

Fourth Commandment: Keep your agency young.

It is a commonly overlooked fact that organizations tend to grow old just as people do, and in growing old they evidence many of the same frailties of old age. No greater compliment can be paid to an organization than that it has retained its youth.

Fifth Commandment: Visualize your agency as a part of the whole social service setup in your community and see that it co-operates with the other agencies and does not endeavor to compete with them.

Sixth Commandment: Have a clear understanding of the place of public and private social agencies in the American system and the relationship between them.

Seventh Commandment: Don't forget to resign.

Regardless of the ability of the individual members of a Board, a reasonable rotation bringing in new personalities and new viewpoints tends to stimulate interest, create enthusiasm, and keep the agency young.

Boards should be reasonably representative of the communities they serve. Our communities are changing constantly, and if Boards are to be truly representative they must change too.

A reasonable turnover in Board membership avoids any suggestion of proprietorship in the agency, or of a clique being in control of it.

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